BRILL

JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS
22 (2024) 219–236

JSHJ
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# The Mouse of the Mysteries

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Received 5 July 2024 | Accepted 14 July 2024 |
Published online 8 August 2024

**Abstract**

This article presents an imaginative exercise in which a fictional author from the year 4025 details results from excavations of archaeological sites dating to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Based on analyses of small domestic finds, as well as the discovery of a monumental complex utilizing similar imagery, the author concludes that people must have worshipped an anthropomorphic mouse god – the Historical Mouse – in the Mechano-Digital Age, keeping devotional votives in their homes and traveling at least once a year to a primary space of worship centered around the experience of various ritual mysteries. This article calls upon students to perform a self-evaluation about their own assumptions and approaches to the ancient world as they witness a hypothetical historian make outrageous, yet plausible, errors in the course of trying to describe an 'ancient' religion.

* My thanks to Jaswinder Bolina, Nancy Evans, and Erin Roberts for their encouragement and insights while writing this piece, and to Sarah Rollens and Robert Myles for their guidance and editorial advice, not to mention their willingness to publish such an unusual approach to the subject matter. I am also grateful to the many students who have worked through this exercise with me in the past.
The title and concept for this article are inspired by David Macaulay, *Motel of the Mysteries* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979). I express my appreciation to Russell McCutcheon for first recommending this book to me many years ago. In the course of my preparation, Evans made me aware of Horace Miner, 'Body Ritual Among the Nacirema', *American Anthropologist* 58.3 (1956), pp. 503–507. Both works use satire and the presumption of cataclysm or other disruption to the historical record in order to creatively misread archaeological evidence.

Published with license by Koninklijke Brill BV | DOI:10.1163/17455197-BJA10038
© ROBYN FAITH WALSH, 2024 | ISSN: 1476-8690 (print) 1745-5197 (online)

**Keywords**

anthropomorphism – archaeology – historical Jesus – iconography – mysteries – pedagogy – pilgrimage – satire – theory

## Introduction/Premise

The year is 4025 – two thousand years after 'The Great Cataclysm'. While still poorly understood, scientists believe the combination of a massive geomagnetic storm, followed shortly thereafter by a supervolcanic eruption on the former North American continent, conspired to set technology and development back by hundreds of years. Globally, volcanic ash, seismic events, tsunamis, and erosion left coastal regions and major urban centers in ruin. Disruptions to commerce, connectivity, and stores of data preceding the eruption were deepened once thermal cooling forced societies to isolate in order to maintain local food supplies and infrastructure. Given that these events took place at the height of the so-called Mechano-Digital Age, with little data kept outside of the cybersphere, it is only in recent decades that scholars have been able to piece together the social worlds and religious practices of these ancient peoples, utilizing what little material evidence remains.

Recent excavations in the region once known as 'the flowery place' or Florida has added much to our understanding of the religious beliefs and practices of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Here, oceanographic sonar has detected the remains of an extensive complex – perhaps a pilgrimage site – dedicated to an anthropomorphized mouse. This study posits that this mouse is the same high deity for which we have found votive offerings in excavated domestic spaces elsewhere from this same time period, suggesting a pan-global religious movement. Exploratory digging in the most ancient portions of the site has revealed a palatial edifice or temple at its geographic center, along with evidence of significant consumption waste, suggesting that this was a frequented, public expanse. Given the apparent scale of the site, it is tempting to conclude that this is a heretofore lost city, challenging those who argue that any physical, ritual space for the Mouse was merely allegorical or a 'fantasyland'.

What follows will demonstrate that people of this era worshipped an array of anthropomorphized animal gods through myth-making and monetary offerings, with the mouse-god remaining at the top of this pantheon. The size and intricacy of this site, which includes numerous structures, tracks, ambulatory spaces, and outbuildings, strongly suggest that so-called

'Mousetics' traveled great distances on an annual basis in order to pay homage to their deity and engage in a variety of initiation ceremonies related to the life and teachings of the historical Mouse. Investigations of this site also reinforce theoretical positions related to understanding the apparent, traditional ethics of the Mechano-Digital era, among them limitless capital, innovation, and amusement.

## The Pedagogical Purpose

The purpose of this imaginative exercise is to reframe our methodologies and approaches to historical studies in a way that is both amusing and accessible to undergraduate students. When teaching courses on the New Testament, the historical Jesus, or Greco-Roman society and culture, I have found it effective to role-play the exact scenario outlined above near the end of the semester, without warning, as if it were shared knowledge between us. I distribute a handout of my lecture dated to '4025' (or whatever date is 2000 years in the future) and proceed to give a PowerPoint outlining the events of The Great Cataclysm, showing images of excavated regions of the globe, speculating about connectivity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (e.g., why does physical money begin to disappear archaeologically? What are these metallic and plastic rectangular devices found throughout landfills?), and devising a few idiosyncratic claims or questions, depending on the interests of my students (e.g., are 'Swifties' a religious group? What do excavations of football arenas yield in terms of understanding 'ancient' forms of entertainment?). Engaging in this thought experiment allows students to become more aware of their own assumptions about scholarship that interprets the past. Thus, students further develop skills foundational for self-reflection and critical thought.

For context, over the last decade or so, I have taught at a variety of institutions – from the ivy league, liberal arts colleges, and currently at an R1 as a graduate student instructor, adjunct lecturer, and tenure-track/tenured professor – and I have deployed this particular exercise across the board. My students tend to be young undergraduates or continuing learners with a curiosity about the ancient Mediterranean world, but little pre-knowledge (beyond, perhaps, religious education). My courses generally fill to a capacity between 25–125 students; for smaller courses, I structure this lecture around large group participation; for my larger classes, I will break the students into discussion groups that present their findings to the whole at the end of the session.

The 'article' that follows is designed to aid the kind of in-class activity just described. Whether it be assigned as homework or distributed for reading

during class as a prelude to a lecture or activity, my hope is that it can foster both conversation and creativity. While unorthodox, I find that this exercise can help students to reinforce concepts and reconsider taxonomies; it is especially suited for courses involving religion, archaeology, the historical Jesus, iconography, Jesus literature, pilgrimage, and/or the broader Greek and Roman world. Some questions one might pose to the class in conjunction with this article include: Have we examined anything about the ancient Mediterranean world this semester that you now view differently or might evaluate through a different lens? Does this exercise challenge your definition of religion? How or what would you add to this analysis (e.g., another feature of the small finds and/or location(s) described) to try your hand at a creative reworking of evidence? Are there any texts that we could bring into this evaluation?

I particularly recommend using this piece as a launching point for students to try their hand (individually or in groups) at their own version of a 'lost' religious figure or site. I have embedded 'easter eggs' or subtle references throughout for those familiar with various aspects of ancient Mediterranean studies (e.g., the 'mus musculus', Livia's frescoes, the Roman dodecahedron, the Pantocrator Christ at Saint Catherine's monastery). And I have written the last section in such a way that students can easily expand on my (mis)reading of the evidence.

The journal has been kind enough to typeset the feature article so that it can be circulated without necessarily revealing the information detailed above. The name of our future/fictional scholar is an anagram of my own name.

# The Mouse of the Mysteries

*Blythe Harlow Finns*

The foremost challenge for historians of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is to avoid slipping into hypotheticals and speculation. With so little known about this era immediately pre-dating The Great Cataclysm (hereafter, the GC) – and with frustratingly little physical or digital data that survives – scholars often find themselves uncritically reproducing fictions about society and culture in the so-called 'Before Times'. However, thanks to recent advances in cyber and bytearchaeology, along with greater access to the key urban and coastal hubs decimated by the GC, we are better able to describe and assess the day-to-day practices of people in the Mechano-Digital age.[1]

One long-neglected field of inquiry for Mechano-Digital studies is the role of religion in the public sphere; while the preservation of domestic structures in global continental centers has provided some useful data, relatively little work has been done in terms of connecting this evidence to what has been revealed in the more populated and frequented Unrecoverable Zones (see Figure 1).[2] In his pioneering 4025 article 'The Ubiquity and Fecundity of the Mouse God in Antiquity', for example, Petrosynth Makemake suggests the anthropomorphic mouse votives found throughout surviving twentieth- and twenty-first century dwellings and commercial regions are not mere toys or decorative motifs, but ritual objects connected to a larger network of religious worship.[3] Makemake's thesis would be considerably strengthened with reference to the excavations currently underway in the territories formerly known as California, France, Japan and, crucially, Florida, where other major mouse-centric complexes have potentially been identified. This study aims to contribute to that conversation.

1 As with many terms and concepts in this article, I am inventing references that echo the ways in which the field typically describes the ancient Mediterranean world – e.g., 'Mechano-Digital' is meant to mirror 'Greco-Roman', 'mus musculus' imitates 'mos maiorum', and so forth.

2 All images in this piece were produced using AI software through Canva's Magic Media design feature on Canva.com. Canva has very strict copyright parameters and will not produce images that violate their fair use policies; therefore, I used phrases such as 'post-apocalyptic archaeology site with mouse head' or 'post-apocalyptic archaeology site with geodesic dome and mouse head' to create the content in this article and at no time used terms referencing a specific character or company. Canva's 'Terms of Use' can be found at: https://www.canva.com/policies/terms-of-use/ (accessed June 13, 2024).

3 This futuristic pseudonym and article title are plays on Peter Brown's oft-cited 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), pp. 80–101. My intention is not to parody Brown's theses in that piece per se, but to acknowledge its overall influence in the field. The reference to minor planet Makemake is due to its color (brown) and because my five-year-old son, Taran, who loves space, told me it was a good idea.

FIGURE 1 A map of ancient 'Florida' as it appears today in 4025. The region known as "The Kingdom" remains largely underwater.

Indeed, my own excavations in Florida have yielded convincing evidence not only of the anthropomorphic male mouse deity in question, but also a female consort and other, more minor anthropomorphic animals, to be discussed. The existence of significant architectural hubs and related spaces indicating circumambulation – including outbuildings with channels of controlled, progressive movement – suggest that these were sites of religious pilgrimage and/or initiation rites. While the digital and cybernetic collapse of the GC make reconstructing the Mechano-Digital economy exceptionally difficult, relative data on the cost and dangers of travel suggest that a pilgrimage of this sort would be motivated by far more than mere normative, social influence or status-seeking. Recovered references to an 'annual' return to these locations further reinforce the notion that the Mouse required some form of routine supplication. Moreover, the substantial presence of discarded

Styrofoam, microplastics, and short-term consumption objects throughout the stratigraphy of the site indicate a consistently high, yet transient, population (Figures 2–3).

By bringing together our rural and urban evidence, I hope to reinforce Makemake's thesis, while also adding to our understanding of the power and prestige of the Mouse in antiquity through his holy sites. My focus will be on newly excavated zones of what has been colloquially termed 'the Kingdom' which includes a central monument with a series of turrets (Figure 4), as well as its surrounding grids, which contain remnants of mechanical conveyances (Figure 5). And the recent discovery of a nearby geodesic dome (Figure 6) suggests that continuous advancements in technology added to the religious experience of mouse practitioners or Mousetics.

Finally, I will connect this analysis to the larger question of whether examining the networks and practices of Mouse people can shed new light on Historical Mouse Studies; rather than focus on the existence of the historical Mouse per se, I question what later origin stories produced *about* the Mouse indicate in terms of Mechano-Digital ethics. Although we are limited a great deal by the degradation of the principal manufacturing media of our extant ritual objects (i.e., plastics, polystyrene), scholarship of the last decade has established that the Mouse is rarely presented in a single guise. Manifestations ranging from industrial day laborer to stage performer are rife throughout mus-material culture. That noted, the Mouse is nearly always depicted partially nude, with only short pants, gloves, and protective shoes. In combination, this presentation suggests that the Mouse was (literally) fashioned according to the predominant virtues of his epoch: the necessity of labor, inescapable capitalism, limitless amusement, and, perhaps most importantly, rugged masculinity. These traditional ethics – often referred to as the 'mus musculus' – were reinforced through daily worship of this central murine icon. For that reason, we will begin with what we know about Mouse worship in daily, local life, thereby situating my archaeological findings at the so-called kingdom complex within the religious and social worlds of the pre-GC era.

## The Mouse in Domestic Space

As always, and as briefly noted above, we are bedeviled in this field by the prevalence, but limited utility, of plastics. Often far too fractured or degraded to yield useful data, many of our stores are found within contexts for which toxicity renders them inaccessible to ethical excavation. Domestic spaces have provided something of an exception, with relative levels of chemical harm at

FIGURES 2 AND 3 Discarded plasticware and other media discovered on site (Florida, NA, ca. 2025 B.T.)

FIGURE 4 The central structure of the primary pilgrimage site, currently under excavation (Florida, NA, ca. 21st century B.T.)[4]

4 Some useful volumes on spectacle, pilgrimage, and religion include Annabel Jane Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Erin Roberts and Jennifer Eyl (eds.), *Christian Tourist Attractions, Mythmaking, and Identity Formation* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

FIGURE 5 One of the larger conveyances, which appears to have been propelled on a single rail (Florida, NA, ca. 21st century B.T.)

acceptable values for further exploration. In such zones, the most common small finds include utensils, decorative objects, the remnants of mass-produced housewares, chemicalized textiles, and, compellingly, votives.

The bibliography on votives in the Mechano-Digital age is vast and a full overview is beyond the scope of the present study. Again, Makemake's work in this area has been definitive, demonstrating that what were previously regarded as entertainment objects (e.g., dolls or figurines), or narrow symbols of economic status, are more likely religious icons. His central thesis is that the sheer ubiquity of these finds out-scales the population density of children, indicating that they were possessed by adults far beyond the age for which the manipulation of toys and learning through play were developmentally appropriate (Figures 7 and 8). Moreover, the estimated amount of capital required to obtain these votives suggests ritual necessity; if these were mere toys, they would represent irrational expenditures en masse. He concludes that the level of sacrifice required to obtain and showcase these figures indicates a less practical and more sacred necessity.

FIGURE 6 Geodesic dome, currently under excavation (Florida, NA, ca. 21st century B.T.)

FIGURES 7 AND 8 Small domestic finds located throughout the continent known as North America (ca. 20th century B.T.)

I submit that a certain measure of practicality may have also been in view for the Mousetic. The pervasive presence of this iconography in everyday life implies that the Mouse-as-object served an applied function – namely, as an apotropaic symbol. With so many of our votives located in what were once ancient bedrooms and common spaces (e.g., living rooms), it is tempting to suppose that they were placed in dedicated niches or other displays to represent protection while gathering or sleeping. This interpretation makes a good deal of sense when one further considers that the tripart spheres of the Mouse's head have occasionally been found on the bumpers and windshields of ancient vehicles, presumably as a talisman against traffic accidents. Within this context, Mouse-themed watches and jewelry are possible protective amulets (Figures 9 and 10) for all age groups, given their variety of sizes. Similarly, for instances in which the Mouse is featured in the uniform of a particular occupation (e.g., train conductor, astronaut, student) or recreational activity (e.g., camping), it is probable that this garb mirrors the dress of the home's inhabitant(s). In such cases, the Mouse was invoked to protect the faithful in their labors and ensure continued personal and commercial prosperity (i.e., guild cult).[5]

In gratitude for this daily protection, the Mouse likely required some demonstration of reciprocal dedication beyond domestic, devotional displays. However, unlike the temples, synagogues, churches, mosques, gurdwaras, and so forth of other religious traditions, no places of public, localized worship for Mousetics have been securely identified to date. We know that the so-called Mouse Movement was a relatively young – albeit rapidly growing – religion at the time of the GC, so perhaps this archaeological lacuna should not come as a surprise. There is also the possibility that surviving references to Mouse clubs or 'clubhouses' indicate that rituals were performed by the faithful in private homes. Regrettably, if this were the case, there is likely little we can reconstruct in terms of the nature of these assemblies or their significance in terms of the theology of the Mouse (e.g., is the Mouse overwatching? Ever-present?).

But the discovery of the vast and monumental sanctuary at Florida, with its clear references to the Mouse, its history, and its pantheon, offers a compelling alternative explanation for understanding early Mouse worship – namely, that veneration was centered on pilgrimage to a specific holy site. While further study is necessary, initial estimates place the number of annual devotees at the tens of thousands (on the bases of midden analysis and the relative square mileage detected). These numbers may, in fact, prove to be overly conservative

5 My gratitude to Justin Ritzinger for articulating the notion of 'guild cult' during a conversation about this project.

FIGURES 9 AND 10 Apotropaic watch faces (findspot and date unknown)

as some scholars speculate that a portion of the unexcavated, submerged buildings could be lodgings of some kind.

Compellingly, the excavated zones around the main turreted building have yielded a series of largely square or rectangular sites, containing rooms with centralized metal tracks (Figures 11 and 12). These tracks undoubtably accommodated small vehicles, controlling the progressive ambulation of its passengers. This controlled movement and structured sequencing models a deliberate and systematic process of revelation – a mystery revealed. Small finds in each of these locations are also thematic, with each zone circumscribed according to a specific narrative concern, to be discussed. At end, this evidence

FIGURES 11 AND 12 Excavations underway at the Florida site; note the circumambulating tracks (R) (Florida, NA, ca. 21st century B.T.)

communicates that Mousetics visited this complex in droves not only to pay homage but also for access to special rites and/or knowledge about the Mouse. It was here that the mysteries of the Mouse – his origins, teachings, and central role in human history – were unveiled.

In what follows, I detail the current archaeological findings, leading the reader through what we believe to be the commonly taken path for a Mousetic pilgrim navigating the holy site. I also discuss the contextual significance of each zone, both in terms of its substance and its probable theological meaning. Finally, I will synthesize these findings in order to provide a new perspective on how the immersive experience of the mysteries encouraged its participants to divorce themselves from the concerns that defined the need for the Mouse's apotropaic protection. This radical rupture from mortal fears and anxiety – this break from the self – was salvific, auguring an afterlife scenario characterized by limitless amusement, consumption, and recreation, free of consequence.

## The Mouse of the Mysteries

At present, approximately 15 percent of the known complex in Florida has been partially or fully uncovered. Future exploration will have to be conducted either through advances in underwater archaeology or drainage technology. Comparative studies with the findings from excavations currently underway in cities like Los Angeles and Paris, noted above, may also prove clarifying once available.

I have written extensively elsewhere about the monumental temple or 'weenie' of the primary zone (Figure 4); unfortunately, space does not allow me to rehearse those arguments here.[6] In short, the weenie remains the focal point of the site – it is one of the tallest overall structures, with all other buildings in the vicinity surrounding it in a roughly circular pattern. Interestingly, the weenie itself does not contain a great deal of interior complexity; its façade is far more detailed than its chambers, which may indicate that the Mouse was a transient presence. Remnants of mosaics on the walls of its inner pathways feature bucolic landscapes with small animals, projecting peace and calm or an idealized view of nature.

Before one reaches the central temple, they must first enter the main gates and onto a long and broad pathway, lined with small square houses comprised

6 'Weenie' is a technical term in architectural design to refer to the largest or most eye-catching feature in a given space (usually related to tourism) – i.e., something that 'should hold people's attention as they [look] down a vista'; cited from Richard E. Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Florida* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 84.

of wood and brick. These facilities contain remnants of the kind of votives discussed previously, indicating that this was a source location for domestic devotional objects or dedicatory or sacrificial items for use on site. Of note, coins dating from as early as the 1980s to as late as the GC have been located throughout the complex, particularly in water features. These coins serve no apparent commercial purpose. Most likely, therefore, they are dedications to the deity, perhaps from those unable to obtain pricier offerings.

The footprint of this thoroughfare is reminiscent of the main streets of established towns throughout the region formerly known as North America. Some scholars date this style of architecture to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. We have no extant attestation of the Mouse before the era of the documented World Wars, thus it is possible that this entry area intends to convey the origins of the Mouse. This interpretation would challenge the well-worn legend that the Mouse first revealed himself to his followers on the battlefield of the Western front, as depicted in the famous Pantocrator Mouse icon (Figure 13). However, considering that the same trinity of circles representing the Mouse's face and ears appears in the apotropaic

FIGURE 13 Artist rendering of the well-known Pantocrator Mouse

symbols previously discussed, it is probable that there is some shared element connecting these competing origin stories for this ancient and protective deity.

Moving past this corridor, pilgrims would have been encouraged to turn east into a new zone containing the first set of outbuildings. Finds in this area suggest an interest in global territories beyond the district of Florida, including further tropical regions, South Asia, and the Pacific. Remnants of a large seafaring vessel and other maritime objects represent the next chapter in the unfolding mysteries of the Mouse's action in human history, with the Mouse seemingly traversing the world by vessel in search of disciples. This further revelation would aid practitioners in understanding how the Mouse became a worldwide phenomenon.

Proceeding clockwise, one is confronted with a new zone that is somewhat esoteric: a more advanced mystery. Rather than continuing with the story of the historical Mouse's life and teachings, this area is less defined, with numerous structures containing mechanized tracks. These spaces may detail the continuing mission of the Mouse, or they may offer a series of immersive sensory experiences that reveal how Mouseitism was established throughout the globe. The overall exterior aesthetic appears to pre-date the historical Mouse, primarily representing the so-called North American colonial and expansionary periods. One possibility is that this series of mysteries indicate that the Mouse, while revealed during a later period, was pre-existent or eternal.

Another curious feature of this space is the remains of an ancient pillory (Figure 14). Presumably, at this stage in the progression of the site, should an insincere or heretical individual be identified, they could be restrained from moving on to the final mystery. An even darker possibility is that this feature symbolizes a significant event in the life of the historical Mouse that could be reenacted by certain members of the community. However, one would expect the pillory to be better attested if it were directly related to the movement's central figure, as is the case with the crucifix in Christianity. In either case, the Mouse's divine authority and potential for endurance – indeed, his masculinity – are reinforced through the presence of this restraint and deterrent.

Also found in this zone is a large rectangular space with ambulating tracks and the remnants of artificial skeletons. Although fragmented, there are additional objects that suggest the funerary trade, including gravestones and oversized caskets. Here, the reality of the mortal condition may have been presented as the fate for those who failed to consent to the salvific nature of the Deity. Alternatively, this building may have provided a glimpse into the

FIGURE 14 Remnants of an ancient pillory (Florida, NA, ca. 21st century B.T.)

afterlife for willing participants in the Mouse; freed from disease and death, the advanced devotee was able to experience what eternity awaits.[7]

The final zone, completing the circle of the compound, is by far the most ambiguous: the final mystery. Further archaeological exploration is pending, which will hopefully help shed greater light on its purpose, but we are able to divine that the theme of this precinct was the cosmos. Containing the tallest structures on site, one imagines that a sensation of elevation or rising – perhaps even apotheosis – was critical to this immersive experience. Furthermore, we are aware that there was some form of space exploration at the time of the GC, so perhaps this mystery dovetails with the ongoing technological advances of the age. This theory is supported by the discovery of innovative architecture throughout the site as a whole, including the geodesic dome

7 Participation in the Mouse is intended to echo the notion of 'participation in Christ' in the letters of Paul; Stanley Stowers, 'What is Pauline Participation in Christ?', in idem, *Christian Beginnings: A Study in Ancient Mediterranean Religion* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2024), pp. 181–94.

previously mentioned, which represents both efficiency and eco-responsibility in its minimalist design.[8] Once again, with the Mouse linked to technology, commerce, and labor, it makes a good deal of sense that Mousetics would be deeply committed to advancing knowledge and ideals associated with those ethics.[9] Future research might also consider the inverse possibility that the global space programs were themselves motivated not only by scientific invention, but also an ongoing search for the Mouse in the outer reaches of the universe.

Once these mysteries were fulfilled, the footpaths led pilgrims back to the starting point of their journey, wiser and stronger in their faith. Throughout this process, there would have undoubtably been a sense of transcendence – both religious transcendence or perhaps even ecstatic experience, and likely a measure of amusement or joy; joy in fulfilling one's sacred mission and joy in breaking away from daily life and labor.

## Further Findings and Preliminary Conclusions

Other notable features of the site include the presence of lesser anthropomorphized creatures. Poorly attested, we are aware of a female murine figure, who appears to be a consort or priestess of the Mouse; she is featured in traditional feminine dress (i.e., a dress with short skirt, high heels) with exposed undergarments, leading some to suggest that her iconography signals concubinage. Two companion ducks have also been identified, along with a gangly canine. Some manifestations of the male duck include a nautical uniform; perhaps this is one of the Mouse's earliest disciples, unveiled in relation to the first mystery. That these figures exist in concert with such a significant, personified deity, however, indicates that they served purposes of their own. Whether they invited independent cult as something akin to saints or bodhisattvas is a subject worthy of further research.

Finally, a key function of any site of religious pilgrimage is the opportunity it offers for cultivating social networks. With so many Mousetics making this annual journey, connections between varied early Mouse communities surely would have been fostered. Should future developments in digital

8 R. Buckminster Fuller and Robert Marks, *The Dymaxion World of Buckminster Fuller* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973).

9 For an example of scholarship on the historical Jesus linking economy, religion, and politics, consider: James Crossley and Robert J. Myles, *Jesus: A Life in Class Conflict* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2023), pp. 20ff.

archaeology begin to salvage more of our lost electronic data, documenting the correspondence between these individuals or groups will help us better understand the developing theology of the Mouse before the near-apocalyptic collapse of the GC – a trauma that even the redemptive promise of the Mouse could not withstand. And surely these efforts will contribute broadly to a better understanding of the people, beliefs, and practices of the nearly lost Mechano-Digital age.